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LETTER DATED 3 DECEMBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 3 December 1997, concerning the return of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to Baghdad, which I have received from the Director General of IAEA.

I should be grateful if you would bring the Director General's letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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ANNEX

Letter dated 3 December 1997 from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to the Acting Director General's letter of 21 November 1997 (S/1997/920, annex), which reported that IAEA inspectors had returned to Baghdad on 21 November and had resumed inspections the following day.

On 25 November 1997, the IAEA team was temporarily increased to 12 persons in order to restore the technical basis of the IAEA's ongoing monitoring and verification activities as quickly as possible. Since that time, the Nuclear Monitoring Group has carried out more than 42 inspections at 40 locations, some of which have been inspected more than once.

The IAEA has directed its resources towards verification of the status of critical dual-use equipment. All such equipment which was known to have been serviceable prior to 29 October 1997 has been verified and accounted for.

There are no indications that any such equipment was used for proscribed nuclear activities in the 23-day period during which monitoring activities were suspended. In this context, it is also highly unlikely that any proscribed nuclear activities could have occurred during that period.

In accordance with its notification to IAEA, Iraq removed IAEA seals from five of the six high-explosive bunkers at the Al Qa Qaa facility and dispersed approximately 50 tons out of the total of 228 tons of high explosives (HMX) stored in the bunkers to other locations at Al Qa Qaa. IAEA inspectors have witnessed the return of this material to its original storage location and have taken measures to account for the original inventory. There are no indications that any of this material has been diverted.

In addition to these activities, other IAEA personnel and Member State experts have implemented previously planned tasks to service and upgrade the video surveillance systems at two facilities and to carry out an extensive campaign for the collection of environmental samples.

I would be grateful if you could bring this information to the attention of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamed ELBARADEI